

PROJECT I.D. 1390-04-00
 JANESVILLE TO WATERTOWN
 STH 26
 ROCK, JEFFERSON, AND DODGE COUNTIES, WISCONSIN

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c) AND 49 U.S.C. 303

BY THE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
 AND
 STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

COOPERATING AGENCY

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 (PURSUANT TO 33 CFR 230)

APPROVALS

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ABSTRACT

State Trunk Highway 26 (STH 26) from Janesville to Watertown is a principal route in south central Wisconsin having national, state, regional, and local importance. This corridor is part of the National Highway System and is designated as a Connector highway in Wisconsin's *Corridors 2020* plan. The route has high existing and forecasted traffic volumes including trucks, high crash rates, and substandard capacity and level of service. The study presented here indicates that 4-lane divided facility with limited access characteristics is necessary to address these deficiencies. A preferred alternative has been developed and evaluated for responsiveness to project need and for social, economic, and environmental impacts. The existing STH 26 corridor is used to the extent practical with an eastern bypass at Milton, and western bypasses at Jefferson and Watertown to provide travel characteristics of an effective state highway/regional travel corridor, to maintain a consistent highway speed, and to minimize relocations and other environmental impacts. Primary impacts include agricultural land acquisition and severances, effects on four archaeological sites, wetlands, and residential and business relocations.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT STATEMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC 4321-4347, became effective January 1, 1970. This law requires that all federal agencies have prepared for every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement (now called an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is, therefore, required to have prepared an EIS on proposals that are funded under its authority if the proposal is determined to be a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

EISs are required for many transportation projects, as outlined in NEPA. The processing of an EIS is done in two stages. Draft EISs are first written and forwarded for review and comment to federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise and are made available to the public. This availability to the public must occur at least 15 days before the public hearing and no later than the time of the first public hearing notice or notice of opportunity. After this period has elapsed, preparation can begin on a Final EIS.

Final EISs are prepared to reflect the distribution of the draft statement by including the following:

1. Basic content of the draft statement, as amended, due to internal agency comments, editing, additional alternatives being considered, and changes due to the time lag between the Draft and Final EIS.

For this FEIS virtually all of the DEIS is reprinted. Significant or substantive new material and changes to tables are presented in gray overstrike. New language required for the Final EIS such as the "Preferred Alternative" in the summary is indicated with a sidebar (as illustrated in the right-hand margin). Minor corrections in grammar, syntax, etc., have been made without such highlighting.

2. Summary of public hearing environmental comments.
3. Summary of comments received on the Draft Statement.
4. Evaluation and disposition of each substantive comment.

A Record of Decision cannot be completed and signed sooner than 90 days after circulation of the Draft Statement to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or 30 days after submission of the Final Statement to the EPA.

Both the Draft and Final EIS are full disclosure documents, which provide a full description of the proposed project, the existing environment, and an analysis of the anticipated beneficial and/or adverse environmental effects.

Names and addresses of those individuals to contact for additional information, or to provide written comments to, are indicated on the title sheet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 1 of 2

| <u>Section</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|----------------|---|
| SUMMARY | |
| S.1 | Project Location..... S-1 |
| S.2 | Project Description S-1 |
| S.3 | Purpose and Need S-1 |
| S.4 | Alternatives S-3 |
| S.4.1 | General..... S-3 |
| S.4.2 | Alternatives Considered..... S-5 |
| S.4.3 | Detailed Study Alternatives S-7 |
| S.4.4 | Preferred Alternative..... S-9 |
| S.5 | Environmental Impacts S-15 |
| S.6 | Other Activities Required S-15 |
| S.7 | Regulatory Compliance S-16 |
| S.8 | Other Government Agency Actions..... S-16 |
| S.9 | Environmental Commitments S-19 |
| | |
| I | PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION |
| | |
| 1.1 | STATEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED I-1 |
| 1.2 | PROJECT BACKGROUND I-3 |
| 1.2.1 | Project Location I-3 |
| 1.2.2 | Termini and Study Segments I-3 |
| 1.2.3 | Project Status I-6 |
| 1.3 | NEED FOR PROJECT I-6 |
| 1.3.1 | Route Importance and System Linkage I-6 |
| 1.3.2 | Existing and Future Traffic Volumes..... I-10 |
| 1.3.3 | Capacity and Level of Service I-11 |
| 1.3.4 | Existing Highway Characteristics I-14 |
| 1.3.5 | Crashes and Safety I-17 |
| 1.3.6 | Modal Relationships I-19 |
| 1.3.7 | Transportation Planning History and Local Interest I-20 |
| 1.4 | SUMMARY OF PURPOSE AND NEED I-24 |
| | |
| II | ALTERNATIVES |
| | |
| 2.1 | DEVELOPMENT AND SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES |
| 2.1.1 | General..... II-1 |
| 2.1.2 | Scoping Process II-1 |
| 2.1.3 | Screening Process and Methodology II-3 |
| 2.1.4 | Stages of Development II-5 |
| 2.1.5 | Description of Environmental and Geographical Features II-8 |

| | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| 2.2 | ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED | II-11 |
| 2.2.1 | Range of Alternatives Considered | II-11 |
| 2.2.2 | South Segment (Segment 1)..... | II-15 |
| 2.2.3 | Central Segment (Segment 2) | II-24 |
| 2.2.4 | North Segment (Segment 3)..... | II-33 |
| 2.2.5 | Other Alternatives Considered..... | II-47 |
| 2.3 | ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY | II-48 |
| 2.3.1 | Description of No Build Alternative | II-49 |
| 2.3.2 | Description of Build Alternatives | II-51 |
| 2.3.3 | Comparison of Detailed Study Alternatives | II-61 |
| 2.4 | PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE | II-69 |
| 2.4.1 | Selection of Preferred Alternative..... | II-71 |
| 2.5 | OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY ACTIONS | II-78 |

III AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

| | | |
|--------|---|--------|
| 3.1 | LAND USE AND RELATED CHARACTERISTICS..... | III-1 |
| 3.1.1 | Geographical Setting..... | III-2 |
| 3.1.2 | Land Use Planning and Zoning..... | III-2 |
| 3.1.3 | Land Use Density..... | III-11 |
| 3.1.4 | Agricultural Land Use..... | III-13 |
| 3.1.5 | Institutional Land Use..... | III-14 |
| 3.1.6 | Commercial/Industrial Land Use | III-16 |
| 3.1.7 | Residential Land Use | III-18 |
| 3.1.8 | Cemeteries | III-19 |
| 3.1.9 | Transportation | III-20 |
| 3.2 | SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS..... | III-26 |
| 3.2.1 | Population Levels and Trends..... | III-26 |
| 3.2.2 | Population Characteristics – Age and Racial Mix | III-30 |
| 3.2.3 | Economic Setting | III-33 |
| 3.2.4 | Work Force | III-35 |
| 3.2.5 | Community Services | III-37 |
| 3.3 | ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELATED FEATURES | III-39 |
| 3.3.1 | Lakes, Rivers and Streams | III-39 |
| 3.3.2 | Wetlands | III-40 |
| 3.3.3 | Floodplains | III-43 |
| 3.3.4 | Groundwater and Drinking Water Supply | III-43 |
| 3.3.5 | Upland Plant Communities | III-44 |
| 3.3.6 | Wildlife and Aquatic Species..... | III-45 |
| 3.3.7 | Threatened and Endangered Species..... | III-45 |
| 3.3.8 | Natural and Conservancy Areas..... | III-45 |
| 3.3.9 | Public Use Lands | III-48 |
| 3.3.10 | Archaeological Resources..... | III-53 |
| 3.3.11 | Historic Resources | III-55 |
| 3.3.12 | Soils | III-57 |
| 3.3.13 | Hazardous Materials | III-58 |
| 3.3.14 | Noise | III-59 |

3.3.15 Visual and Aesthetic Resources III-60

IV ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 LAND USE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS IV-1

4.1.1 Consistency with Local and County Land Use Plans IV-3

4.1.2 Institutional Impacts..... IV-9

4.1.3 Agricultural Impacts IV-11

4.1.4 Transportation and Community Access IV-16

4.1.5 Economic Impact on Existing Businesses..... IV-28

4.1.6 Servicing of Industrial Sites IV-31

4.1.7 Residential and Neighborhood Impacts IV-33

4.1.8 Residential and Business Relocations IV-35

4.1.9 Environmental Justice IV-48

4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELATED RESOURCE IMPACTS IV-49

4.2.1 Lakes, Rivers, and Streams IV-49

4.2.2 Wetlands IV-53

4.2.3 Floodplains IV-63

4.2.4 Groundwater and Drinking Water Supply IV-72

4.2.5 Upland Habitat and Wildlife IV-72

4.2.6 Threatened and Endangered Species..... IV-75

4.2.7 Natural and Conservancy Areas..... IV-77

4.2.8 Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Impacts IV-78

4.2.9 Archaeological Resources/Section 106 Review IV-83

4.2.10 Historic Resources/Section 106 Review IV-91

4.2.11 Hazardous Materials IV-98

4.2.12 Air Quality IV-100

4.2.13 Noise IV-101

4.2.14 Visual and Aesthetic Resources IV-106

4.2.15 Beneficial Reuse IV-109

4.2.16 Energy IV-109

4.2.17 Construction Impacts IV-109

4.3 SUMMARY OF INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS IV-112

4.3.1 Regulatory basis and Definitions of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts..... IV-113

4.3.2 Potential Land Use and Socioeconomic Indirect and Cumulative
Impacts IV-113

4.3.3 Tools to Address Indirect and Cumulative Impacts IV-122

4.4 RELATION OF LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF THE HUMAN
ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF
LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY IV-128

4.5 IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES IV-129

4.6 MEASURES TO MINIMIZE AND MITIGATE ADVERSE IMPACTS IV-129

4.6.1 Traffic..... IV-130

4.6.2 Farmlands..... IV-130

4.6.3 Acquisition/Relocation IV-130

4.6.4 Surface Water Resources..... IV-131

4.6.5 Wetlands..... IV-131

| | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 4.6.6 | Floodplains..... | IV-136 |
| 4.6.7 | Upland Habitat and Wildlife | IV-137 |
| 4.6.8 | Natural And Conservancy Areas | IV-137 |
| 4.6.9 | Archaeological Resources..... | IV-137 |
| 4.6.10 | Air Quality | IV-138 |
| 4.6.11 | Noise | IV-139 |
| 4.6.12 | Visual And Aesthetic Resources | IV-140 |
| 4.6.13 | Borrow and Disposal..... | IV-140 |
| 4.6.14 | Enhancements | IV-141 |

V ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE FINDING, PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 5.1 | REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES | V-1 |
| 5.1.1 | No-Build Alternative | V-1 |
| 5.1.2 | Build Alternative..... | V-1 |
| 5.2 | DETERMINATION OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE..... | V-1 |
| 5.2.1 | No-Build Alternative | V-2 |
| 5.2.2 | Build Alternative..... | V-2 |
| 5.3 | MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM..... | V-6 |
| 5.3.1 | Avoid Wetlands | V-6 |
| 5.3.2 | Minimize Wetland Impacts..... | V-6 |
| 5.3.3 | Conceptual Wetland Mitigation Plan..... | V-6 |
| 5.4 | WETLAND FINDING | V-7 |

VI ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE FINDING, FLOODPLAINS

| | | |
|-------|--|------|
| 6.1 | REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES | VI-1 |
| 6.2 | FLOODPLAIN IMPACTS | VI-1 |
| 6.3 | PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE | VI-2 |
| 6.4 | DETERMINATION OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE..... | VI-3 |
| 6.4.1 | No-Build Alternative | VI-3 |
| 6.4.2 | Build Alternatives | VI-3 |
| 6.5 | MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM..... | VI-5 |
| 6.5.1 | Minimization Measures | VI-5 |
| 6.5.2 | Mitigation Measures | VI-6 |
| 6.6 | FLOODPLAIN FINDING..... | VI-6 |

VII COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

| | | |
|-------|--|--------|
| 7.1 | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT | VII-1 |
| 7.1.1 | Study Committees..... | VII-1 |
| 7.1.2 | Local Officials Meetings..... | VII-2 |
| 7.1.3 | Public Information Meetings/Public Hearing | VII-3 |
| 7.1.4 | Additional Meetings..... | VII-11 |
| 7.1.5 | Project Notification and Newsletters | VII-11 |
| 7.1.6 | News Media | VII-11 |
| 7.1.7 | Toll-Free Telephone..... | VII-11 |

| | | |
|-------|--|--------|
| 7.2 | AGENCY COORDINATION | VII-12 |
| 7.2.1 | Pre-Draft EIS | VII-12 |
| 7.2.2 | Post-Draft EIS | VII-16 |
| 7.3 | DRAFT EIS COMMENTS AND RESPONSES | VII-19 |
| VIII | LIST OF GROUPS RECEIVING COPIES OF THE EIS | VIII-1 |
| IX | LIST OF PREPARERS..... | IX-1 |
| X | REFERENCES | X-1 |
| XI | INDEX | XI-1 |

LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table</u> | <u>Page</u> | |
|--------------|---|--------|
| S.4.1 | Alternative Development Process Schematic | S-4 |
| S.5 | Environmental Matrix for Detailed Study Alternatives..... | S-12 |
| S.5.1 | Environmental Matrix for Preferred Alternative | S-18 |
| 1.3.2-1 | STH 26 Existing and Forecasted ADT | I-10 |
| 1.3.2-2 | STH 26 Average Daily Truck Volumes..... | I-11 |
| 1.3.3-1 | Level of Services Characteristics..... | I-12 |
| 1.3.3-2 | STH 26 Existing and Forecasted Level-Of-Service | I-13 |
| 1.3.4.5-1 | Existing Access to STH 26 – Rural Segments..... | I-16 |
| 1.3.4.5-2 | Existing Access to STH 26 – Urban Segments..... | I-16 |
| 1.3.5-1 | STH 26 Crash Summary – 1994-1998..... | I-17 |
| 1.3.5-2 | South Segment STH 26 Crash Rates 1994-1998 | I-18 |
| 1.3.5-3 | Central Segment STH 26 Crash Rates 1994-1998..... | I-19 |
| 1.3.5-4 | North Segment STH 26 Crash Rates 1994-1998 | I-19 |
| 2.1.4 | Alternative Development Process Schematic | II-6 |
| 2.2.2 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for South Segment Preliminary Alternatives..... | II-17 |
| 2.2.3 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for Central Segment Preliminary Alternatives | II-26 |
| 2.2.4 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for North Segment Preliminary Alternatives..... | II-35 |
| 2.2.4.5 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for Through Town Preliminary Alternatives..... | II-42 |
| 2.3.3 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for Detailed Study Alternatives | II-62 |
| 2.4 | Summary of Estimated Impacts for Preferred Alternative | II-70 |
| 3.1.3 | Land Use Density | III-13 |
| 3.1.4 | Rock, Jefferson and Dodge County Agriculture Profiles | III-14 |
| 3.2.1-1 | Historical Population Growth | III-27 |
| 3.2.1-2 | Projected Population Growth..... | III-27 |
| 3.2.1-3 | Projected Population Growth: WisDOA Predictions Compared to County Government Predictions..... | III-30 |
| 3.2.2-1 | Population Characteristics | III-31 |
| 3.2.2-2 | Racial Mix | III-31 |

| | | |
|------------|--|--------|
| 3.2.3.2 | Personal Income and Per Capita Personal Income | III-33 |
| 3.2.3.3 | Real Estate and Total Equalized Values | III-34 |
| 3.2.3.4-1 | Housing Types | III-35 |
| 3.2.3.4-2 | Household Characteristics | III-36 |
| 3.3.2 | Wetlands in the Project Area | III-41 |
| 3.3.6 | Fish Species Likely to Be Found In the Rock River and Its Tributaries | III-44 |
| 3.3.7 | Rare Species In or Near the Project Area | III-46 |
| 4.1 | Summary of Land Use and Socioeconomic Impacts | IV-1 |
| 4.1.1 | Existing Planning Network | IV-4 |
| 4.1.3.1 | South Segment Farmland Impact Summary | IV-13 |
| 4.1.3.2 | Central Segment Farmland Impact Summary | IV-14 |
| 4.1.3.3 | North Segment Farmland Impact Summary | IV-15 |
| 4.1.8 | Summary of Relocations | IV-37 |
| 4.1.8.4-1 | Available Replacement Housing | IV-46 |
| 4.1.8.4-2 | Maximum Estimated Number of Displacements vs. Available Replacement Housing | IV-46 |
| 4.1.8.4-3 | Available Apartment Rental Units | IV-47 |
| 4.1.8.4-4 | Available House Rental Units | IV-47 |
| 4.1.8.6 | Summary of Relocation Costs | IV-48 |
| 4.2.1 | Pollutant Concentrations in Highway Runoff | IV-50 |
| 4.2.1.1 | South Segment Stream Crossings | IV-52 |
| 4.2.1.2 | Central Segment Stream Crossings | IV-52 |
| 4.2.1.3 | North Segment Stream Crossings | IV-53 |
| 4.2.2.2 | South Segment Wetland Impacts | IV-54 |
| 4.2.2.3 | Central Segment Wetland Impacts | IV-58 |
| 4.2.2.4 | North Segment Wetland Impacts | IV-59 |
| 4.2.2.5 | Indirect (Hydrologic) Wetland Impacts | IV-60 |
| 4.2.2.6 | Wetland Impacts Summary – Preferred Corridor | IV-61 |
| 4.2.3.3 | Predicted Water Surface Elevations for the Regional Flood | IV-70 |
| 4.2.5.2 | South Segment Upland Wooded Habitat Impacts | IV-73 |
| 4.2.5.3 | Central Segment Upland Wooded Habitat Impacts | IV-73 |
| 4.2.5.4 | North Segment Upland Wooded Habitat Impacts | IV-75 |
| 4.2.6 | Potential Impacts to Habitat of Threatened and Endangered Species | IV-76 |
| 4.2.8.1 | Section 4(f) Impacts - South Segment | IV-80 |
| 4.2.8.2 | Section 4(f) Impacts - Central Segment | IV-82 |
| 4.2.8.3 | Section 4(f) Impacts - North Segment | IV-82 |
| 4.2.9.1-1 | Identified Archaeological Sites | IV-84 |
| 4.2.9.1-2 | Archaeological Sites Potentially Impacted | IV-88 |
| 4.2.9.2 | Archaeological Sites Within the Preferred Alternative Corridors | IV-90 |
| 4.2.11 | Summary of Hazardous Materials Site Ratings | IV-99 |
| 4.2.12.2 | Maximum Projected Carbon Monoxide (CO) Concentrations | IV-101 |
| 4.2.13.2-1 | Noise Level Criteria for Considering Barriers | IV-102 |
| 4.2.13.2-2 | Traffic Noise Impact Summary | IV-103 |
| 4.2.17-1 | Construction Equipment Sound Levels | IV-111 |
| 4.2.17-2 | Construction Noise/Distance Relationship | IV-112 |

| | | |
|---------|--|--------|
| 4.3.2 | Summary of Potential Indirect and Cumulative Impacts for Communities in the STH 26 Study Area..... | IV-123 |
| 4.6.5.3 | Potential Wetland Mitigation Site Summary..... | IV-135 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure</u> | | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| S.1 | Project Location | S-1 |
| S.4 | Project Study Segments | S-3 |
| S.4.4.1 | Preferred Alternative South Segment..... | S-10 |
| S.4.4.2 | Preferred Alternative Central Segment | S-11 |
| S.4.4.3 | Preferred Alternative North Segment..... | S-12 |
| | | |
| 1.1 | Project Location Map | I-1 |
| 1.2.1 | Project Location Map | I-3 |
| 1.2.2.1 | South Segment Location Map | I-4 |
| 1.2.2.2 | Central Segment Location Map | I-5 |
| 1.2.2.3 | North Segment Location Map | I-6 |
| 1.3.1.1 | WisDOT Corridors 2020 Map | I-7 |
| | | |
| 2.2.2 | South Segment Preliminary Alternatives..... | II-16 |
| 2.2.2.3 | Through-Town Alternative – City of Milton..... | II-19 |
| 2.2.3 | Central Segment Preliminary Alternatives | II-25 |
| 2.2.3.6 | Through-Town Alternative – City of Jefferson | II-30 |
| 2.2.4 | North Segment Preliminary Alternatives..... | II-34 |
| 2.2.4.4 | Through-Town Alternative – City of Watertown | II-37 |
| 2.2.4.5 | Through-Town Rail Corridor Alternative – City of Watertown..... | II-41 |
| 2.3.2.1 | South Segment Detailed Study Alternatives Overview | II-53 |
| 2.3.2.1a | South Segment Detailed Study Alternatives Overview Update | II-54 |
| 2.3.2.2 | Central Segment Detailed Study Alternatives Overview..... | II-57 |
| 2.3.2.3 | North Segment Detailed Study Alternatives Overview | II-60 |
| | | |
| 3.1.1-1 | Project Study Area..... | III-3 |
| 3.1.1-2 | Existing Land Use – South Segment | III-5 |
| 3.1.1-3 | Future Land Use – South Segment | III-6 |
| 3.1.1-4 | Existing Land Use – Central Segment..... | III-7 |
| 3.1.1-5 | Future Land Use – Central Segment..... | III-8 |
| 3.1.1-6 | Existing Land Use – North Segment | III-9 |
| 3.1.1-7 | Future Land Use – North Segment | III-10 |
| 3.1.3 | Land Use Density | III-12 |
| 3.1.9.1 | Interstate, US, and State Highway Connections to STH 26 | III-21 |
| 3.1.9.3 | Southeast Wisconsin Railroads..... | III-24 |
| 3.2.1-1 | Historic Population Growth..... | III-28 |
| 3.2.1-2 | Predicted Population Growth..... | III-29 |
| 3.2.2 | Racial Mix | III-32 |

| | | |
|----------|--|--------|
| 3.3.9.1 | South Segment Public Use Lands..... | III-49 |
| 3.3.9.2 | Central Segment Public Use Lands | III-50 |
| 3.3.9.3 | North Segment Public Use Lands..... | III-51 |
| 4.1.8.1 | South Segment Relocation Graph..... | IV-38 |
| 4.1.8.2 | Central Segment Relocation Graph | IV-40 |
| 4.1.8.3 | North Segment Relocation Graph..... | IV-43 |
| 4.2.2.2 | South Segment Wetlands | IV-55 |
| 4.2.2.3 | Central Segment Wetlands | IV-56 |
| 4.2.2.4 | North Segment Wetlands | IV-57 |
| 4.2.3-1 | Floodplains South Segment | IV-64 |
| 4.2.3-2 | Floodplains Central Segment..... | IV-65 |
| 4.2.3-3 | Floodplains North Segment | IV-66 |
| 4.2.3.3 | Hydraulic Cross Sections – Crawfish River | IV-69 |
| 4.2.9-1 | Archaeological Sites (South Segment) | IV-85 |
| 4.2.9-2 | Archaeological Sites (Central Segment)..... | IV-86 |
| 4.2.9-3 | Archaeological Sites (North Segment) | IV-87 |
| 4.2.10.1 | Historic Boundaries St. Coletta School Historic District and Alverno Cottages..... | IV-94 |
| 4.2.10.2 | Historic Boundaries Slight’s Standard Filling Station..... | IV-96 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 2 of 2

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| A | Pre-Draft EIS Correspondence | |
| B | Post-Draft EIS Correspondence | |
| C | Agricultural Impact Statement Executive Summary | |
| D | Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan | |
| E | Summary of Noise Analysis | |
| F | Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) | |

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | South Segment – Average Daily Traffic | |
| 2 | Central Segment – Average Daily Traffic | |
| 3 | North Segment – Average Daily Traffic | |
| 4 | Typical Sections | |
| 5 | Detailed Study Alternatives – South Segment | |
| 6 | Detailed Study Alternatives – Central Segment | |
| 7 | Detailed Study Alternatives – North Segment | |
| 8 | Preferred Alternative – South, Central, and North Segments | |